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SUBJECT: UNMIL TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT MISSION ON TRACK FOR
LATE APRIL

REF: A. USUN 278
[1](#)B. USUN 297

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. UN DPKO officials on March 31 said a technical assessment mission would evaluate progress in Liberia in light of set benchmarks. Getting an effective police force was key, and ensuring legitimate elections in 2011 would be a reasonable use of UNMIL, according to DPKO. DPKO warned if UNMIL's drawdown was accelerated, it might not be able to reinforce UNOCI, and also listed additional concerns facing Liberia. DPKO suggested the U.S. assist in creating a coast guard to counter border and narco-trafficking threats. DepPolCouns reiterated the U.S. will resist any French or UK efforts to drawdown UNMIL troops prematurely. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Representatives from the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) told DepPolCouns that DPKO would send a technical assessment mission (TAM) to Liberia in late April. Raisedon Zenenga, head of the Africa Division of DPKO, said the TAM will investigate progress in light of the set benchmarks, which focus on: 1) building the Liberian army; 2) training the police; 3) disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; and 4) implementing state authority in each of Liberia's 15 counties. Additionally, he said the TAM will assess current internal and regional threats, including the rise in regional narco-trafficking and piracy. Zenenga suggested the international community, and particularly the U.S., consider assisting in the creation of a Liberian coast guard to help mitigate these threats. He also said the police are the key benchmark, and that it was not possible to predict police performance even now. He noted the progress and setbacks the police force has faced during its history.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Zenenga acknowledged that elections are not a listed benchmark but agreed that ensuring legitimate elections in 2011 is a reasonable exercise of UNMIL discretion. He said the UK wants an "indication of direction" of UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) force deployment after 2010, and that France wants "right-sizing" (i.e. downsizing).

[1](#)4. (SBU) DPKO's Chief of Military Planning William Bryan Norman said UNMIL and the UN Mission in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) are authorized to reinforce each other, and noted UNOCI is currently drawing down its troop level. He warned UNMIL could be put in the position of not having the reinforcement capacity to offer UNOCI if UNMIL accelerates its drawdown plan. Norman requested U.S. assistance during the TAM to allow UN access to assess the ongoing military training (as was permitted during the 2007 TAM).

[1](#)5. (SBU) Norman flagged other concerns that could hamper achieving UNMIL's benchmarks: reintegrating ex-combatants; the military threat of demobilized soldiers; and the growing threat of regional narco-trafficking. He said DPKO would conduct an interactive briefing for the Security Council

before the TAM departs. Norman stressed the military planning part of the TAM would complement benchmark review, but was different in that it would focus on "military gap analysis" (i.e. how to get the military from where it is to where it needs to be). Norman requested U.S. assistance in getting access to U.S.-led training facilities, as was granted during the 2007 TAM, to allow direct assessment of the Armed Forces of Liberia.

¶6. (SBU) DepPolCouns said the U.S. will resist any unwarranted political pressure from France or the UK to drawdown UNMIL's troops prematurely. He stressed the need for safe elections in 2011. Norman and Zenenga agreed UNMIL would be a necessary part of ensuring smooth elections, and Zenenga commented DPKO will also use this TAM to draft a post-election plan for UNMIL.

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